



[*Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South*](#) by Virginia Willis, Copyright © 2018. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Photography by Angie Mosier © 2018.

Our Summary:

Pour yourself a strong cup of Coffee and Chicory blend, find a quiet corner and gift yourself this precious time to enjoy [*Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South*](#). This is more than just a cookbook! Cover to cover it educates, inspires and illustrates the uniqueness of world-class Southern food and the diversity of the cultures that create it. Southern food authority and award-winning writer [Chef Virginia Willis](#) takes us on a Southern tour from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia to Florida's gulf coast, to the farms and fields of the Carolinas, to her beloved Georgia. Including

stories and recipes from Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas and Tennessee that introduces us to the regions that showcase the culinary diversity of the South as a whole. Her wit, charm and wisdom helps us understand that *food* unites us, and that Southern food is exhilarating, intriguing and delicious! And, as she states, "learning what defines Southern food has evolved and changed. Memory shapes the story of our lives and allows us to interact with the world." So, she says, "pull up a chair, *everyone* is welcome at my table."

What you need to know:

Get it: [*Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South*](#) by Virginia Willis copyright © 2018. Photography by Angie Mosier © 2018. (Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, May 1, 2018) (Hardcover \$30.00; [Amazon \\$19.49](#); [Kindle \\$16.99](#))

See it: 336 pages of exquisitely photographed full color photos of southern food and the regions that correspond with each recipe. A concise table of contents outlining eight recipe packed chapters as well as an easily referenced index.

Make it: 80 recipes with introductory stories and tips that ensure your success as you make each delectable one. Mouthwatering photos of most finished recipes using a wide variety of vegetables, grains and starches, meats and seafood. This cookbook offers choices for every food style and taste.

Cherie's Review:

I was lucky enough to travel to New Orleans earlier this year to enjoy the city's 300th anniversary celebration. While there, I was able to take a food lovers tour given by a local chef and culinary school. This amazing tour gave me insight into the vast cultural influences that inspires the delicious and unique foods of this beautiful crescent city. In her latest cookbook, [*Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South*](#), [Chef Virginia Willis](#) brings together a beautiful collection of recipes that showcase the multicultural reality of the New South. *Spicy Asian Cajun BBQ Shrimp with Grilled Baguette* is a dish reminiscent of Sicilian shrimp scampi. Italians immigrated to New Orleans when the trade routes opened and by 1870, New Orleans had the largest Italian-born population in the United



States—even greater than New York City! This butter-poached shrimp, flavored with dried spices and herbs spooned high on grilled bread will send your taste buds into overdrive!

Greek immigrants arrived in the late 19th century in Birmingham, Alabama where they worked in the iron and steel mills. Others began small businesses such as fruit stands and sandwich wagons. These early food truck entrepreneurs began the now prosperous Birmingham Greek restaurant community. The recipe for *Greek -Style Beef Tenderloin Medallions with Oregano Butter* from [Secrets of the Southern Table](#) was inspired from The Bright Star Restaurant founded in 1907 in Bessemer, Alabama (which was designated by the James Beard Foundation as an American classic in 2010). It is an elegant and delicious dish that pairs well with [Chef Willis's](#) recipe for *Greek Crispy Lemon-Herb Potatoes*.

Sweet Potatoes with Soy-Citrus Glaze is a Korean classic that [Chef Willis](#) includes in [Secrets of the Southern Table](#). She adapted it from a recipe that comes from an Atlanta based restaurant, Heirloom BBQ. It is a delicious deep-fried sweet potato with a soy-citrus glaze topped with a pat of butter and a sprinkling of spicy red pepper. [Chef Willis](#) describes Georgia as home to the fastest growing Korean community in the United States. Additionally, her Korean inspired recipe for *Glazed BBQ Beef Ribs* is sweet, sticky, mouthwatering and one you will surely enjoy!

West African Chicken Stew with Collard Greens and Peanuts is a robust stew highlighting the fundamental peanut which gives this dish, “it’s essential earthy character.” [Chef Willis](#) pays tribute to [Dr. Jessica B. Harris](#) as the expert on documenting the food and culture of Africa in the Americas. Author of twelve critically acclaimed cookbooks, [Dr. Harris](#) notes that peanut stews are found across West Africa and were originally made with indigenous groundnuts before the peanut arrived in the New World in the sixteenth century. The list of additional ingredients to this wonderful stew, [Willis](#) writes, can be okra, tomatoes, hot peppers and ginger. Her recipe in [Secrets of the Southern Table](#) for *Smashed Fried Okra with Spicy Yogurt Dipping Sauce* is delicious and her narrative informs us that India is the largest producer of okra in the world!

Venezuelan roots from an Atlanta based chef inspired [Willis](#) to create *Shredded Beef Arepas* for [Secrets of the Southern Table](#). She states that these delicious corncakes represent what she considers the modern Southern table to be. If, she continues, you choose not to prepare the arepas, the filling would make one mean South American sloppy joe on a toasted hamburger bun or between two *Summer Hoecakes* for a real multicultural treat!

[Secrets of the Southern Table](#) is the sixth cookbook that [Chef Virginia Willis](#) has written. This cookbook is her first that describes the diversity of Southern food. She traveled across eleven states for nearly a year meeting with Southerners of every race, color, religion, creed, sexual orientation, age and ancestry. Meeting friends old and new, greeted by people with open arms who did not necessarily share her political or religious views, but welcomed her to their table nonetheless. She considers this food lover’s tour to be one of the greatest gifts of her life. She shares all this and more in this stunningly beautiful and inspiring cookbook. Each chapter begins with lovingly written regional stories that shape the recipes that follow. From Southern farmers to small business owners, you will want to start planning your Southern food tour today!



Food has that unique ability to bring us all together. [Secrets of the Southern Table](#) lends us to fully realize that we are all welcome at the table and everyone adds some wisdom to the skillet.

Recipes to cook from [Secrets of the Southern Table: A Food Lover's Tour of the Global South](#) by Virginia Willis. Copyright © 2018 Reprinted with permission by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company.

[Cathead Biscuits](#)

[Dulce de Leche Pecan Sweet Rolls](#)

[Rainy-Day Ribs](#)